

REMARKS

The recommendation regarding the drawings has been addressed.

The rejection of Claims 1-3, 5 and 8-10 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph is deemed fully addressed by the foregoing non-limiting amendments largely adopting the Examiner's suggestions. Claims 3, 8, 9 and 10 indicated to be allowable should now be allowed. The terms in the claims find clear antecedent basis and explanation in the disclosure.

The rejection of Claims 1, 2 and 5 as being anticipated by Dziewoski under 35 USC §102(b) is traversed, and reconsideration is requested.

Referring to Figs. 1 and 3 of the Dziewoski, the flattened end portion 1b does not utilize a curved transitional slack portion that effectively transmits a compression force applied to the end portion to the tubular element nor a semi-spherical shaped tubular section which directly continues to the complete round section without a transitional section having gradually changing elliptical cross sections that elongates the connection part and reduces mechanical strength. Although not specifically shown, the cross section of the transitional section of Dziewoski between the flattened end portion and the cylindrical tubular element is in all likelihood a gradually changing elliptical shape.

The connection part formed on an end portion of a chord member of pipe member according to the present invention defined in Claims 1, 2 and 5 includes the flat section of the gently curved, controlled shape transitional slack portions which extend to both ends of the semi-circular boundary between the flat section

Thereby, a compression force applied to the connection part is effectively and advantageously transmitted to the completely round pipe member without damage to the connection part in a manner not suggested in Dziewoski.

Further, because of the controlled, semi-spherically shaped transitional tubular section without an intermediate transitional section and having gradually changing elliptical cross sections extending to the rounded pipe member which directly connects to the complete cylindrical pipe member, potential elongation of the connection part is prevented so as to enhance the mechanical strength of the connection part. Again, no such concept is suggested in Dziewoski.

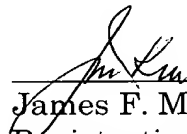
Accordingly, early and favorable action is requested. If, however, the Examiner has any remaining issues or questions, he is requested to contact the undersigned so that a personal interview can be arranged to expedite allowance of the case.

Serial No. 09/245,720
Amendment Dated: February 13, 2004
Reply to Office Action

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #037227.47565DV).

Respectfully submitted,

February 13, 2004



James F. McKeown
Registration No. 25,406

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844

JFM/lvb 037227.47565US

304012